



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Fire and Aviation
3833 South Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705-5354
<http://www.nifc.gov>



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To: State Directors

From: Deputy Assistant Director (NIFC), Fire and Aviation

Subject: Career Training Opportunity – Technical Fire Management, 2008-2009

DD: 05/30/08

06/13/08

Fire and Aviation is offering an educational opportunity for fire management candidates to attend Technical Fire Management (TFM) sponsored by Washington Institute and Colorado State University. This educational opportunity is designed to improve the technical proficiency of fire specialists beyond the level that may be attained through on-the-job training. The subject matter includes statistics, fire ecology, fire behavior, fuels management, data analysis, economics and finance.

This training is for current career and career conditional employees occupying positions such as assistant fire management officer, fuels specialist and suppression specialists at the GS-6 through GS-11 levels who intend to pursue a career in fire management. The full benefit of the course can only be realized by those who have experience in fire management and fuels management. It is intended for people who have fire management advancement potential, but lack the educational requirements to satisfy the GS-0401 job classification series.

This program is demanding and is approximately 19 months long. It is divided into five two-week modules, a one-week module, and a final project report. It is estimated that the completion of the final project alone will require between 250-500 hours. Students can expect to devote extra time to the course work, outside normal working hours, in order to satisfactorily complete the course.

The topic of each student's final TFM project will be agreed upon between the home unit manager, the student, and fire management officer. The final project is a written report culminating the learning process and is often the most challenging part of the program. The project is accomplished by systematically describing, analyzing and solving a problem.

These analytical methods, written out as a study plan, will be mutually determined by the student, the student's supervisor and Washington Institute. The final project report will be reviewed by a panel and then the student is required to make an oral presentation before a panel of interagency representatives to defend the decision criteria used in the analysis and solving the problem. This project must be completed within the time frames established.

Tuition and per diem for this program is approximately \$21,000 per student. If the student is a no-show in Module I, full tuition (\$9,500) will be billed to the appropriate funding code. Tuition, travel, and per diem (base salaries and overtime pay for travel excluded) for one student will be paid for by Fire and Aviation.

Selectees **MUST** have completed S-390. In addition, the following skills are required: Technical writing course or the equivalent, basic algebraic manipulation, basic personal computer skills (Windows 2000 with Microsoft Office or equivalent), and proficiency in the use of the BEHAVE program.

Selectees may also want to acquire the following skills: Knowledge of the National Environmental Policy Act, field sampling and measurement, agency budgeting processes, Weather Information Management Systems, and National Fire Danger Rating System processes.

The following information provides the tentative dates for each of the modules:

Module I	Math/Computer Review	Oct 13-17, 2008
Module II	Statistics	Oct 27- Nov 7, 2008
Module III	Economics	Jan 5-16, 2009
Module IV	Fuels	Mar 2-13, 2009
Module V	Fire Ecology	May 4-15, 2009
Module VI	Fire Management	Oct 5-16, 2009
Module VII	Final Projects	April 19-23, 2010

Most of the modules will be held in Bothell, Washington (near Seattle), but some modules may be held at other locations.

Selectees will be required to sign an agreement to complete the training. Failure to complete the seven training modules will require repayment of the training costs.

It has been determined that successful completion of this program will qualify the candidate for 18 of the 24 hours required to qualify for the General Biological Science (GS-0401) series. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) human resources offices require students to present a certificate from Washington Institute in order to obtain this credit. The certificate will only be issued after completion and presentation of the final project. The student must complete all modules and earn a passing score of 70 percent on the mid-term and final examinations.

Participants have the option of buying credits (three per module) through Colorado State University. The rate is \$236.00 per module for Modules II through VII or \$1,416.00 for the full program. Module I is not accredited with Colorado State University.

This training requires a total commitment on the part of both employees and supervisors in terms of time and support to satisfactorily complete the 19-month program. *Those applicants selected to attend will be required to sign a program completion agreement.* Supervisors are encouraged to provide adequate support to employees involved in the program. The successful completion of previous final projects have required between 250-500 working hours. *The amount of normal duty time allocated to each student for the completion of this project should be determined and agreed upon between the candidate and the supervisor. Any additional time required to complete the program will be on the student's own time.*

The BLM has 13 of the 45 available TFM student slots for the upcoming session. Positions will be allocated in the following manner:

Arizona	1
New Mexico	1
Alaska	1
California	1
Colorado	1
Wyoming	1
Idaho	1
Nevada	1
Montana	1
Oregon	1
Washington	1
Utah	1
National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC)	<u>1</u>
Total	13

The position allocated to NIFC (above) will not automatically be filled by a NIFC employee; that is one possibility, but that slot could also go to any state having an applicant with merit.

Upon request, the BLM Training Unit at NIFC, will forward the answer key for the TFM Entrance Examination to the State Offices to assist in the rating and ranking process. States will then forward the prioritized student applications to the BLM Training Unit at NIFC. Prioritized lists and application packages are due at the BLM Training Unit at NIFC no later than June 13, 2008.

All personnel from Field and State Offices will apply for the program via their own State Fire Management Officer by May 30, 2008. The BLM employees at NIFC will apply directly to the BLM Training Unit.

Applicants should submit the following in the order listed (documents stapled in the upper left corner; and please, no covers or fancy presentation packages):

- 1) SF-171, OF-612 or résumé, including training records and/or college transcripts.
- 2) Response to the Evaluation Criteria, not to exceed two pages for all criteria.
- 3) Technical Fire Management Application Statement, Approval, and Recommendation Form bearing the appropriate signatures.
- 4) The TFM Program Completion Agreement bearing appropriate signatures.
- 5) Response to TFM Entrance Examination.

Necessary forms and selection criteria are included as attachments to this Information Bulletin.

All materials from applicants are due in the appropriate state offices by May 30, 2008. All selection information and application materials are due at the BLM Training Unit at NIFC by June 13, 2008.

Bureau of Land Management Training Unit (FA-331)
National Interagency Fire Center
Attn: Ted Mason
3833 S. Development Ave.
Boise, Idaho 83705

If you have questions, please contact Ted Mason, 208-387-5322 or email Ted_Mason@nifc.blm.gov.

Signed by:
Gary Bowers
Acting Deputy Assistant Director (NIFC)

Authenticated by:
Pat Lewis
Supervisory Mgmt. Asst.

4 Attachments

- 1 - Selection Criteria for Technical Fire Management (1 p)
- 2 - Technical Fire Management Application Statement, Approval, and Recommendations (1 p)
- 3 - Technical Fire Management Program Completion Agreement (1 p)
- 4 - Technical Fire Management Entrance Examination (5 pp)

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